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PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Requirements for population specialists in national institutions

Report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

The present report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/93 of 26 July 1989 in which the Secretary-General, was requested to prepare for the Population Commission at its twenty-sixth session a report on requirements for population specialists in national institutions and international organizations. The report focuses on (a) general issues related to the requirements of population specialists; (b) requirements and training of population specialists at the national level; and (c) procedures for the selection and recruitment of population specialists in the United Nations Secretariat.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Population Commission at its twenty-fifth session recommended that a study be made of national personnel requirements in population and the training required to meet those needs (United Nations, 1989a, para. 95).

2. That recommendation was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1989/93 of 26 July 1989 in which the Secretary-General was requested to prepare for the Population Commission at its twenty-sixth session a report on requirements for population specialists in national institutions and international organizations.

3. The present document focuses on three major topics: (a) general issues related to the requirements of population specialists; (b) requirements and training of population specialists at the national level; and (c) procedures for selection and recruitment of population specialists and technical co-operation expert personnel in the United Nations Secretariat. The document was prepared with the collaboration of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) of the Department of Administration and Management (DAM), the Population Branch and the Programme Support Division of the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD) and the Population Division of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA).

I. GENERAL ISSUES ON THE REQUIREMENTS OF POPULATION SPECIALISTS

4. A basic requirement for achieving the objectives and goals of the World Population Plan of Action and of the recommendations for its implementation is the availability of skilled professionals. The shortage of trained population specialists has always been a major handicap in those countries that have adopted population policies and that have decided to carry out effective population programmes.

5. Recognizing the above drawback, at the International Conference on Population, 1984, Governments were invited "to develop an adequate corps of trained persons for the effective formulation and implementation of integrated population and development policies, plans and programmes at all levels" (United Nations, 1986, recommendation 75). The most recent review and appraisal of the progress made towards achieving the goals and recommendations of the Plan of Action identified the management of population programmmes as one of the main issues to be placed before the Economic and Social Council (United Nations, 1989b). The Council considered the issue and concluded that "Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are urged to give high priority to the managerial aspects of population programmes and to assure the availability of trained specialists in that area" (resolution 1989/92, annex, recommendation 12).

6. Governments and the international community have manifested increasing interest in population activities and, concomitantly, in strengthening the availability of personnel and institutional resources. An indication of this trend

is the growing number of institutional arrangements reported by Governments to deal with population and development issues. According to the results of the Sixth United Nations Population Inquiry among Governments, 70 per cent of Governments indicated that they had a unit that took into account population variables in development planning within their central planning or programming agencies, and about 70 per cent reported having a policy for integrating population variables into the development planning process (United Nations, 1990a).

7. Another indicator is the increasing number of professionals in the field of population studies. Membership in the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), the professional association of population specialists, for example, increased from 395 members from 54 countries in 1957 to close to 2,000 from 130 countries by mid-1990.

8. It should be noted that there is no single way to define a population specialist. Following a well-established tradition, for the purpose of this report it has been considered appropriate to refer to the wider field of concern as population studies rather than demography, and, consequently, to population specialists rather than demographers. The term population studies encompasses demographic analysis, including the study of the determinants and consequences of population trends and the formulation and implementation of population policies and programmes.

9. Further specification of the concept of population specialist may be inferred from the World Population Plan of Action. The Plan embraces a large variety of topics that go beyond the traditional frame of demography and recognizes explicitly the importance of the interrelationships between population trends and socio-economic development. Because of its policy- and programme-oriented character, the Plan and the recommendations for its further implementation also include numerous provisions on other topics that affect and may be affected by population variables (for example, the quality of the environment, the condition of women, etc.).

10. Population activities and issues directly related to population, in this context, may include any of the following:

(a) Production of population statistics (collection and analysis of demographic data gathered through population censuses, civil registration systems, surveys, etc.);

(b) Development of methods of research and analysis, including the elaboration of models;

(c) Studies on the structure (e.g., size, composition and territorial distribution) and dynamics (e.g., fertility, morbidity, mortality, internal and international migration, and nuptiality) of the population;

(d) Preparation of population estimates and projections;

(e) Studies of the interrelationships between demographic variables and socio-economic factors, and those promoting the integration of population concerns into the process of social and economic planning and programming;

(f) Studies of the implications of population variables for sectoral development planning, such as manpower, health, education, housing, urban and regional planning;

(g) Studies of the demographic impact of family planning programmes or of other health or socio-economic programmes;

(h) Teaching of demography and population-related courses;

(i) Design and implementation of information and communication programmes in the field of population;

(j) Providing background material necessary for the formulation of population policies and programmes;

(k) Management and evaluation of population programmes.

11. In the array of skills called upon for population experts, there is a common core to which the various fields of specialist application are added. To work effectively, it is necessary for a population expert to be familiar with the essential body of demographic data, concepts, basic methodologies, models, and policy and programme issues. This core shares some elements with other intellectual and professional disciplines but over the last two decades has developed into a unique and well-defined field. Population experts are not interchangeable with experts drawn from other social and economic areas.

12. It is also necessary that a population expert develop a high degree of expertise in one or another of the various fields of specialist application within the larger field of population. Those various fields have become progressively more highly specialized; although most population experts have general familiarity with a range of areas of specialist application, their most effective work is almost always done in an area where they can develop their particular expertise.

13. Keeping in mind the above considerations, for the purpose of the present report a population specialist is a professional who (a) has a university degree in demography and/or in a related discipline, such as economics, sociology, geography, mathematics, statistics or public health, with core specialization in population; and, furthermore, (b) engages primarily in population activities or works on issues directly related to population.

14. The World Population Plan of Action (United Nations, 1975) prescribed a dual approach to training as "an international programme for training in population matters concomitant with national and regional training programmes adapted and made particularly relevant to conditions in the countries and regions of the trainees" (para. 82) ... "Training ... should ... be interdisciplinary in nature ... should deal not only with population variables but also with interrelationships of these

variables with economic, social and political variables" (para. 83). Governments, academic institutions and the international community have followed those provisions, and a new approach to training in the field of population has been emerging. That new approach has gone beyond the "exclusive province of often single-dimensional formal, academic training given in universities and population centres to a host of activities including an active, energetic and deliberate bridging of the traditional gap between researchers and policy makers" (United Nations, 1986).

15. In addition to responding to the need for training of population specialists, institutional development has been identified as another major area of concern. Institution-building has been perceived as a means of providing an appropriate environment of continuity, stability and steady growth in experience and expertise. Institutional development may refer to a large variety of functions and activities, such as the establishment or strengthening of research and training facilities and of population focal points inside governmental offices, information and clearing-house services, or operational institutions such as family planning organizations or services.

16. Training and substantive facilities are the two main issues related to the provision of population specialists. Nevertheless, there are other related issues, such as recruitment procedures, salaries and incentives, professional mobility, exchange of information among professionals, retraining and the brain drain.

II. REQUIREMENTS AND TRAINING OF POPULATION SPECIALISTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

A. Introduction

17. Since the data required for a study of the requirements for population specialists in national institutions have to come from the countries themselves, a short structured questionnaire was prepared and mailed to 41 countries (members of and observers to the Population Commission and some developing countries that had requested the United Nations in the 1970s and 1980s for assistance in building local infrastructure to train population specialists). Out of 41 countries, 21 responded to the questionnaire; the breakdown of the responses by region is shown in table 1.

18. The study was designed to determine national personnel requirements and the training required to meet those needs. The information was therefore collected at two levels: (a) the present status of population specialists in the country and the training infrastructure available; and (b) perception of future needs in terms of number of population specialists and additional training institutions required.

Table 1. Number of countries that responded to the questionnaire, by region

Region	Number of countries		
	Developed	Developing	Total
Africa	-	3	3
Americas	1	5	6
Asia	-	3	3
Europe	5	2	7
Western Asia	-	2	2
Total	6	15	21

B. Current number of population specialists

19. Two sectors of population activities were identified as most relevant to this issue, namely, the public and the academic sectors. Seniority was classified into three categories: senior, middle and junior, leaving actual definition of each category to the respondents' judgement. The information provided by respondents is shown in table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of population specialists employed in public and academic sectors at different levels

Sector	Junior level	Middle level	Senior level	Total
Developed countries				
Public	218	399	263	880
Academic	516	710	526	1 752
Total	734	1 109	789	2 632
Developing countries				
Public	514	1 049	369	1 932
Academic	255	203	288	746
Total	269	1 252	657	2 678

20. There are 2,812 population specialists presently working in the 20 countries that responded to the question on public sector employment: 22 per cent are at the senior level, 52 per cent at the middle level and 26 per cent at the junior level. It can be observed that in the public sector, developed countries have a higher concentration of population specialists at the senior level than developing countries (30 per cent and 19 per cent, respectively), while the situation at the middle level is the opposite (45 per cent and 54 per cent, respectively).

21. Among the 18 countries that provided information on the question on academic sector employment, there are 2,498 population specialists employed; 33 per cent at the senior level, 36 per cent at the middle level and 31 per cent at the junior level. Contrary to the situation in the public sector, the proportion of senior population specialists in the academic sector is smaller among developed countries (30 per cent, 39 per cent in developing countries), while at the middle level the situation is reversed (41 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively). In three countries there are only senior-level professionals in the academic sector, and in six there are more senior-level than either junior- or middle-level professionals.

22. One notable finding that emerges from the survey is that the public sector employs a large proportion of population specialists in developing countries (72 per cent, contrasted with 33 per cent among developed countries). The situation is reversed in the academic sector: 67 per cent of specialists in developed countries are employed in the academic sector, as compared to 28 per cent in developing countries.

23. The concentration of population specialists at the middle and senior levels, regardless of sector or country, is an indication of the perceived specialized character of population studies. In fact, population studies are usually the subject of a post-graduate specialization in departments of economics, sociology, among others. Some respondents indicated that population activities are carried out by statisticians, sociologists and anthropologists, implying either that the role of population specialists is not yet perceived as a separate academic field or that the shortage of trained specialists obliges them to make use of persons recruited from other fields.

C. Training infrastructure

24. The respondents from developing countries noted their dissatisfaction with the training infrastructure available in their countries and reported that little over 50 per cent of their population specialists were trained nationally. The same respondents pointed out that the lack of infrastructure to produce adequate number of population specialists presents a serious obstacle.

25. The Population Branch of DTCD receives information biennially from United Nations-sponsored regional, interregional and global training programmes and non-United Nations institutions. According to these data, during the period July 1984-June 1986, 12 out of the 15 developing countries included in the survey had trained 93 persons (13 per cent of the total number of trainees from developing countries) under the United Nations training programmes (E/CN.9/1987/3/Add.1).

During the period July 1986-June 1988, 142 additional candidates from 14 out of the 15 countries included in the survey (14 per cent of the total number of trainees from 106 developing countries) were also trained under those programmes (E/CN.9/1989/4/Add.1). In general, through the 1970s and 1980s many developing countries have depended on United Nations regional, interregional and global training programmes and on non-United Nations training centres that are located for the most part in developed countries.

26. The following table summarizes the information gathered from the survey regarding the number of training programmes in developed and developing countries that provide different types of population training. The data should be read with some caution. The figures corresponding to the group of developed countries are strongly influenced by the information provided by one large country (the United States of America). Finally, it is important to take into account that a single academic institution may provide training at more than one academic level.

Table 3. Number of training programmes provided at different levels in developed and developing countries

Type of training provided	Developed countries	Developing countries	Total
Undergraduate	223	31	254
Post-graduate (diploma/certif.)	27	15	42
Post-graduate (Master's level)	118	21	139
Post-graduate (Ph.D. level)	68	21	89
Total number of responding countries	6	15	21

27. The appraisal by the responding developing countries of training facilities outside their countries varied considerably. Many of the respondents considered regional training as very useful and the interregional programmes as cost-effective. All respondents considered training in developed-country universities to be very efficient. Most of the developed countries considered international, regional and interregional/global training programmes in their countries as very good.

D. Adequacy of the number of population specialists currently working

28. It was noted above that overall in the developing countries included in the survey, there are two-and-a-half times as many population specialists employed in the public as in the academic sector. However, the opposite situation exists in developed countries where twice as many population specialists are employed in the academic sector as in the public sector. It should be noted in this regard that in

the developing countries the public sector is called upon to assume many of the responsibilities that are normally considered elsewhere as those of the academic sector. The main reasons are lack of adequate resources and the comparative slowness of the traditional academic sector to embark on new ventures and to seek out the inclusion of such new and important fields as population. It was also reported that in many instances only activities related to population censuses were perceived as legitimate population activities, and that few institutional structures were available either in the public or academic sector to deal with population issues.

29. To respondents from both developed and developing countries, budget problems and lack of funds seemed the most important obstacles to the adequate use of population specialists. They also felt that existing population specialists were not promoting their field adequately and that there was a lack of demographic awareness in general.

30. With respect to the adequacy of the numbers of population specialists employed, only 1 developing country felt that such employment was adequate, while 12 developing countries and 5 developed countries felt that it was unsatisfactory (table 4). Employment in the academic sector was considered inadequate by 12 developing and 4 developed countries, while 1 developing and 2 developed countries found it satisfactory. Thus, there was a general dissatisfaction with the adequacy of population specialists employed in both the public and academic sectors in both the developed and developing countries studied.

Table 4. Number of countries by their perception of adequacy of population specialists employed in the public and academic sectors

Sector of employment	Developed countries			Developing countries		
	Adequate	Inadequate	Total	Adequate	Inadequate	Total
Public	0	5	5	1	12	13
Academic	2	4	6	1	12	13

31. The reasons given by developing country respondents for the inadequate number of population specialists employed in the public sector include: role of population specialists not well understood; population variables are not usually incorporated in the planning exercise; decentralization process; and the low level of remuneration in the public sector. Respondents from developed countries gave insufficient scientific organizational and institutional facilities and financial resources as reasons behind the inadequacy of the number of population specialists in the public sector.

32. In the academic sector, according to respondents from developing countries, the number of population specialists was inadequate because: some universities had no separate demography department, did not offer specialized population studies or had budgetary problems; enrolment in population studies had been growing faster

than the rate of employment of population specialists; the population issue had not been given adequate attention in the academic environment. Respondents from developed countries identified the insufficient promotion of demographic teaching and research, lack of interest on the part of politicians and the general public, and lengthy and time-consuming recruitment process as reasons for the inadequacy of the number of population specialists.

33. Respondents from developing countries expressed the urgent need in public sector offices to integrate population variables in their plans and activities and the corresponding immediate need for population specialists, while developed country respondents gave more emphasis to a lack of specialists in the academic sector, with one country pointing to the importance of recruiting population specialists at a decentralized branch of the central statistical bureau. Developing country respondents mentioned almost every government sector as needing population specialists, while developed country respondents specified academic departments of economics, sociology and political science as needing reinforcement through the inclusion of population issues, with emphasis on demographic studies.

E. Current number and length of vacancies

34. The data collected include also information on the number and the average length of vacancies. A total of 674 vacancies (301 in the public and 373 in the academic sectors) were reported, thus indicating that there were 11 vacancies per 100 existing posts. This information appears in table 5. A relatively high proportion of vacancies are found in the developing countries (18 per cent of posts are vacant) as contrasted with developed countries (3 per cent). The data indicate also a relatively higher proportion of vacancies in the academic sector (13 per cent) than among posts in the public sector (10 per cent). These findings point to the serious implication that the provision of new generations of population specialists and other professionals with some knowledge of population may be severely limited, particularly in the group of developing countries, where almost a third of academic posts were reported vacant.

35. According to the data collected, the weighted mean length of vacancies was 17.7 months (6.5 months among developed countries and 19.4 in developing countries - 25.4 months in the public sector and 11.4 in the academic sector). While there are relatively fewer vacancies in the public sector as compared to the academic sector in the developing countries, the mean length of time to fill those vacancies is higher in the public than in the academic sector. It is the opposite case in developed countries, although the difference between the mean length of time is only a month.

Table 5. Vacancies reported and time taken to fill them

Sector	Number of vacancies	Reported number of employed specialists	Total number of posts	Proportion of vacant posts (percentage)	Average length of vacancies (months)
Developed countries					
Public	47	880	927	5.07	6.0
Academic	44	1 752	1 796	2.45	7.0
Total	91	2 632	2 723	3.34	6.5 a/
Developing countries					
Public	254	1 932	2 186	11.62	29.0
Academic	329	746	1 075	30.60	12.0
Total	583	2 678	3 261	17.87	19.4 a/
Total					
Public	301	2 812	3 113	9.67	25.4 a/
Academic	373	2 498	2 871	12.99	11.4 a/
Total	674	5 310	5 984	11.26	17.7 a/

a/ Weighted average.

36. The above data indicate the seriousness of the lack of population specialists in the group of developing countries included in the survey. Not only is there a very high proportion of vacant posts but the length of vacancies is also extremely high (two years and five months in the public sector and one year in the academic sector). In other words, the data indicates that at the time of the survey there were a total of 11,314 person-months of vacancy among the developing countries that responded (7,366 in the public sector and 3,948 in the academic sector).

37. The survey provided the opportunity to inquire about the most common measures adopted to fill vacancies. In that respect it is noted that only slight differences exist in the modalities employed by both developed and developing countries. For example, six developed and five developing countries indicated that advertising vacancies through the mass media, professional journals, bulletins and so on, followed by selection through interviews, was the most common modality. Two developed and four developing countries mentioned civil service and competitive examinations as the recruitment mode. Six developing countries specified direct nomination and appointment and personal contacts as the most prevalent mode of recruitment in their countries. Two developed countries indicated that recruitment missions (see para. 77 below) were the preferred method.

38. Regarding major problems faced in recruiting qualified professionals in population, three developed and three developing countries specified the "brain drain" to international agencies and to the private sector as their main problem. Rapid "turnover" was another problem cited by two developed and two developing countries. Excessive delay caused by the bureaucratic process of recruitment has been a problem in two of the responding developed countries. Discontinued population programmes and under-utilization of talent and capacity of population specialists were serious problems in two developing countries. In this respect, the developed and developing country situations do not appear to differ significantly.

F. Need for additional population specialists and training facilities in the future

39. The questionnaire used for the survey included a question on the estimated number of population specialists that was anticipated would be required annually in addition to those presently employed. Seventeen countries responded to the question (6 developed and 11 developing); it was reported that 3,190 new population specialists would be required during the next five years, 51 per cent in the public sector and the other 49 per cent in the academic sector - 35 per cent of the total in the developed countries and 65 per cent in developing countries.

40. Most developing country respondents expressed a preference for multilateral technical co-operation to train the required number of population specialists. However, even during the biennium 1986-1988 (the most recent period for which information is available) the United Nations technical co-operation programme annually trained only 500 to 550 candidates from the developing countries (E/CN.9/1989/3/Add.1). To respond to the training needs of a highly conservative estimate of only 3,000 specialists annually over the next five years, the United Nations technical co-operation programme would have to grow by at least four to five times - assuming that bilateral assistance and the countries' own resources would take care of 25 to 33 per cent of the total requirements.

41. Respondents were also requested to determine their preference in relation to the location of training facilities to respond to the future needs. It is interesting to note that the developing countries that would like more of their population specialists trained in-country are the ones that have some of the highest current shortages of such specialists, and thus are least able to provide the needed training through the use of their own existing resources. Developing countries are aware of the continuing importance that access to international infrastructures for the training of their nationals will have over the next several years. Inevitably, therefore, international technical co-operation will be required to play a major role in facilitating and co-ordinating this international training.

42. Countries were also requested to indicate whether there was a need to set up short-term training in population. Thirteen developing countries and all developed countries answered the question. Eleven developing country-respondents considered such training as of high priority, especially for relevant public sector personnel.

43. The second part of the same question referred to the need for long-term training in population. Of the 14 developing countries in the sample, eleven considered those programmes indispensable, two considered them unnecessary, and one did not express a view on the matter. Most countries favouring such training considered both undergraduate- and graduate-level degree programmes in population essential.

44. With respect to both short- and long-term training, the developing countries that responded unanimously suggested that programmes in that area should be initiated and/or strengthened through the relevant United Nations technical co-operation programme.

G. Conclusions

45. The lack of local infrastructure to produce an adequate number of population specialists was cited by all respondents as the chief obstacle to the growth of population studies. At the same time, and not surprisingly, training of trainers was also unanimously pointed out as being of the highest priority.

46. Through other supporting data it is evident that the developing countries have depended throughout the decades of the 1970s and 1980s on United Nations regional, interregional and global training programmes and on non-United Nations training centres in the developed countries. The United Nations population fellowships programme has been found to be very useful in filling these gaps (ST/TCD/SER.E/11). Regional training is widely viewed as very useful, and interregional programmes are seen to be cost-effective. Nevertheless, in general, there continues to be a substantial unmet need to expand the institutional capability for the training of population experts at all levels.

47. There was general dissatisfaction with the existing vacancy management procedure for population specialists in both the public and academic sectors in all the countries covered, including developed countries; the lengthy recruitment process was mentioned as the most important reason. The development of more effective and more flexible recruitment procedures for population experts is thus a matter of considerable urgency.

48. The findings of the inquiry indicate a more serious lack of population specialists in the academic sector in developing countries. This lack carries the disturbing implication that the training of new generations of population specialists and other ancillary professionals may be severely limited. There is an obvious need for countries to ameliorate this situation on a priority basis.

49. In spite of all the innovative, conscientious and determined measures taken by many Governments, "brain drain" and "rapid turnover" seem to continue to plague the field of population studies, among many others. New strategies should be encouraged and supported in order to effectively fight this tendency.

50. With respect to the training of new population specialists, all respondents expressed a preference for multilateral technical co-operation. Estimates of future requirements imply that besides the local component, the United Nations

technical co-operation programme would have to grow several times in order to cope with the demand.

51. Developing countries would like more of their population specialists to be trained locally, and for that purpose they would need immediate technical assistance to develop the needed facilities. United Nations technical co-operation efforts need to be channelled in that direction.

52. Respondents highlighted the importance of international short-term training for senior officials and international medium- and long-term training for trainers and cited multilateral technical co-operation as the preferred modality for the assistance required. Such programmes need to be strengthened in the training strategies of the United Nations.

53. A majority of respondents pointed out that the assistance of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in setting up training facilities in population has been valuable. In view of the fact that there is still a long way to go, it was felt that donor agencies' contribution in this respect could profitably be strengthened, for example, as requested by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1989/94, with respect to the African countries.

III. PROCEDURES FOR THE SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF POPULATION SPECIALISTS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

A. General information

54. The selection and appointment of staff to Professional posts in the occupation of population specialists is undertaken within the context of the basic principles governing recruitment, which are contained in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular, Article 101 and Article 8. Article 101, paragraph 3 reads: "The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible." Article 8 reads: "The United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal subsidiary organs."

55. Succeeding General Assembly resolutions (namely, 33/143, 34/219, 35/210, 37/235, 39/245, 41/206 and 42/220) have further interpreted those principles and elaborated on them. General Assembly resolutions 33/143 and 35/210 set the major framework for recruitment reforms, while the other resolutions reaffirm those principles. Those resolutions primarily mandate the improvement of the geographical and gender distribution of the Professional staff in the Secretariat posts subject to geographical distribution.

56. In General Assembly resolution 33/143 the Secretary-General was requested to adopt, among others, the following measures and guidelines regarding recruitment of Professional staff:

(a) To produce bulletins containing a statement of all existing vacancies and all those expected to arise in the course of the following year which should be issued every six months in order to facilitate the submission by Member States of candidates for recruitment;

(b) To give publicity to the recruitment of personnel in co-operation with Member States, inter alia through United Nations offices, universities and professional organizations, including women's organizations whenever appropriate, to fulfil the recruitment policies outlined in the present resolution;

(c) To improve the composition of Roster of External Candidates, in order to make it more geographically representative and make it better reflect the recruitment needs of the Secretariat among various occupational groups as well as to increase the number of women on the roster, and, prior to filling a vacancy, to make a thorough search of the roster for suitable candidates;

(d) To use competitive methods of recruitment in consultation with the Governments concerned, organized on a national, subregional or regional basis, for selection of staff at the P-1 and P-2 levels with a view to making the geographical distribution of posts in the Secretariat more equitable;

(e) To establish a target of 40 per cent of all vacancies arising in Professional posts subject to geographical distribution during the period 1979-1980 for the appointment of nationals of unrepresented and under-represented countries, in order to ensure that all such countries achieve their desirable ranges during that biennium, while ensuring that the representation of countries which are within desirable ranges does not decrease;

(f) To increase the number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution to 25 per cent of the total over a four-year period in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution and requests other United Nations organizations similarly to establish targets for that purpose.

57. On the subject of the recruitment of women, the General Assembly in its resolution 40/258 B requested the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to increase the number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution with a view to achieving, to the extent possible, an overall participation of 30 per cent of the total by 1990, without prejudice to the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts.

58. The General Assembly, in its resolution 35/210, reiterated a number of requests for action by the Secretary-General and requested the Secretary-General, inter alia:

"(a) To establish and pursue an active recruitment policy in order to raise the levels of personnel recruited from unrepresented and under-represented countries and countries below the midpoint of their desirable ranges to the extent possible towards this midpoint;

"(b) To continue to permit replacement by candidates of the same nationality within a reasonable time-frame in respect of posts held by staff members on fixed-term contracts, whenever this is necessary to ensure that the representation of Member States whose nationals serve primarily on fixed term contracts is not adversely affected."

59. Several Joint Inspection Unit reports and the Twelfth Annual Report of the International Civil Service Commission (1986) reaffirm the above resolutions.

B. Selection of population specialists from within the Organization

60. It must be pointed out that procedures described in the present document apply to recruitment under the 100 series of the Staff Rules of the United Nations Secretariat. Subsidiary organs of the United Nations (such as UNFPA) and other agencies have adopted their own procedures. In addition, procedures for appointments under the 200 series of the staff rules, that is technical assistance personnel, are covered in a separate section of this report.

1. Selection of entry-level posts

61. In 1979, the Secretary-General established annual competitive examinations by occupational groups as the basis for selecting staff members in the General Service and related categories for promotion to posts in the Professional category subject to geographical distribution. This new policy was based on a request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 33/143 of 20 December 1978. As a result, the filling of posts at the P-1/P-2 levels is primarily through either the internal competitive examination, generally referred to as G-to-P examinations, or the national competitive examination (described in section C below). During recent years, from the total number of available posts at the entry level, approximately 30 per cent are filled by Secretariat staff members and 70 per cent from national competitive examinations.

62. Specific provisions concerning examinations for promotion from the General Service to the Professional category are laid down in yearly administrative instructions as applicable to pre-selected occupational groups. The format of the examinations is announced in information circulars which provide examples of the type of questions normally included in the examinations. These examinations are normally open to all United Nations staff members in the General Service and related categories with at least five years of continuous service in the Secretariat who meet the eligibility criteria of having post-secondary education and very good records of performance.

63. The examinations include two written components (80 per cent) and an oral component (20 per cent). The written component comprises a general paper and a specialized one. Candidates who do not score at least 20 per cent of the marks allotted to the written component in a particular occupation are not eligible for the next calendar year's examination in that occupation.

64. A Central Examination Board (CEB) of five members is appointed by the Secretary-General for one year. Their responsibility is to oversee the procedures and arrangements for the examination, select the occupational group and the posts, screen the applications, review and evaluate appeals by candidates, review and decide upon recommendations made by specialized boards and to recommend possible procedural improvements of the examinations.

65. Specialized Boards of Examiners are appointed by the Secretary-General for each occupational group in which examinations are held. Their responsibility is to review and mark the written examinations, conduct the oral examinations and make final recommendations to the CEB.

66. Placement of successful candidates is made by the Secretary-General on the recommendations of the CEB.

67. With regard to the occupation of population specialists in particular, while there has been no specific examination in population studies, as the field of population is not a separately recognized occupational sector in the Secretariat, successful candidates from examinations in social development, statistics and in the fields of electronic data processing (EDP) and economics are selected for posts in various population offices throughout the Secretariat. Prior to the introduction of these examinations in 1979, staff members in the General Service and related categories were promoted to the Professional category in this occupation as a result of an annual promotion exercise.

2. Selection for middle- and senior-level professional posts through internal vacancy announcements

68. The introduction of the Vacancy Management and Staff Redeployment Programme on 22 December 1986 established procedures for filling essential vacant posts through the redeployment of staff. The purpose of the programme was to establish a more rational human resources management system in the context of measures which were being undertaken to streamline and rationalize the Organization.

69. The procedures for selecting the most qualified staff for vacant posts include the participation of the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), the Appointment and Promotion bodies, which are composed of joint staff-management representatives appointed by the Secretary-General, and the Departments/Offices concerned.

70. The procedures include the screening of applications for eligibility and qualifications by OHRM and the evaluation of candidates by Departments/Offices. The joint reviewing body, whose role is described in section E below, evaluates information provided by OHRM and the Department/Office concerned and establishes a short list of up to three names for final selection by the department/office.

C. Recruitment for population posts from outside the Organization

1. Selection for entry-level posts

(a) National competitive examinations

71. General Assembly resolutions 33/143 and 35/210 established the principle of competitive examinations for recruiting at the P-1 and P-2 levels. Parallel mandates of the General Assembly emphasized the need to bring all Member States that are inadequately represented on the staff of the Secretariat within range. One of the key methods selected in achieving this goal is the use of national competitive examinations, which have been held primarily in unrepresented and under-represented Member States.

72. These examinations are devised in consultation with the Governments concerned. A list of Member States participating in each examination is drawn up in advance for occupations in which a given number of vacancies are identified. The Office of Human Resources Management normally suspends all other recruitment action relating to the P-1 and P-2 posts in the occupations specifically identified for the national examinations. The number of posts available each year determines the number of participating countries.

73. Examinations are open to both men and women who may not be more than 32 years of age by the end of the calendar year in which the examination is held. Candidates should hold at least a Master-level university degree in a field directly related to the occupational group of the examination or a first-level university degree with experience in the relevant field. As mandated by the General Assembly, examinations must be organized by broad occupational groups. They are, therefore, designed to test the ability of the candidates to perform a wide variety of functions in the occupational group concerned and to assess their knowledge of key substantive issues rather than detailed knowledge of the narrow area of specialization involved in the duties of P-1 and P-2 posts to be filled through the examination. In the case of recruitment of population specialists, an educational background in social sciences, demography, statistics, electronic data processing or related fields would be relevant. While there has yet to be established a specific examination for population specialists, it should be noted that the 1990 national competitive examinations in social development does contain a demographic component. The national competitive examination comprises written and oral components. The written component of the examination is normally given in English or French; however, parts of this component may be taken in another official language, where appropriate. The oral part is given in English or French. The written component includes a general paper and a specialized paper for each occupational group. A Board of Examiners, established by the Secretary-General, screens applications and decides who should be admitted to the examinations. After the completion of the written and oral examinations, the Board recommends the most suitable candidates for employment.

74. As regards procedures for assignment of successful candidates, the following factors are taken into account in arriving at the final decision: order of priority given by the substantive unit, requirements of the specific posts,

candidates' academic and professional background and the preferences expressed by the individual candidates. Additionally, simplified appointment procedures have been developed for the successful candidates in order to facilitate the filling of vacancies as expeditiously as possible. The type of appointment given to those candidates is normally for a two-year probationary period which would normally lead to permanent status subject to satisfactory service at the end of this two-year period.

75. It is worth while to mention that reserve lists are established as part of the national competitive examination procedures in order to provide a roster of qualified candidates for vacancies to be filled through the external examinations process.

76. The overall results of the competitive examinations have demonstrated that they significantly contribute to an improved geographical balance and, at the same time, help to bring fresh young talent into the Organization.

(b) Other special measures for recruitment of population specialists

77. Pursuant to the appropriate General Assembly resolutions, given that entry-level posts should be filled through competitive methods of selection, and in light of the fact that the 1985 G-to-P examination in social development and statistics and the national competitive examinations in social development and statistics did not produce a sufficient number of qualified candidates and the reserve lists from previous examinations were exhausted, it was proposed that a recruitment mission be organized which would, through standardized questions and structured interviews, contain the competitive elements required. Extensive preparations were undertaken to organize a special recruitment mission to Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands in March 1986. Standardized questions in English and French were prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and the Population Division of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs for those applicants with a background in statistics and demography. The purpose of the mission was to fill a specific number of entry-level Professional posts and to establish reserve lists of qualified candidates.

78. In order to attract a sufficient number of applicants, in addition to those identified through the permanent missions of the three participating countries that responded enthusiastically with active participation, more than 125 universities, professional associations and agencies were contacted by letter. Advertisements were placed in seven publications, and the relevant United Nations Information Centres were also contacted. Out of more than 250 applications received, some 30 candidates were convoked for interviews.

79. As a result of the implementation of a recruitment freeze in March 1986, not all of the successful candidates could be recruited. However, the Secretary-General exempted from the freeze the appointment of two such candidates for posts which were deemed to be vital.

2. Recruitment procedures for middle- and senior-level professional posts

80. When it has been determined by OHRM that an internal staff member is not likely to be found to fill a vacant post, a vacancy announcement, based on an approved classified job description, is issued world wide and circulated for a period of eight weeks. A search of the computerized Roster of External Candidates is also conducted during this period to identify other qualified candidates. Posts which are determined to be technical in nature and difficult to fill may also be advertised in appropriate publications. As soon as the deadline has passed, applications and files are screened with a view to providing the department concerned with a short list of the most qualified candidates for evaluation. These evaluations together with a recommendation concerning the leading candidates are submitted to the Department/Office concerned by OHRM. Interviews of leading candidates are conducted by representatives of the Department and OHRM when necessary.

81. The particulars concerning the selected candidate and all collaterals are then presented to the appropriate appointment and promotion body, described in section E below, which makes a recommendation to the Secretary-General. Once approved by the Secretary-General, provisional offers, which are subject to a candidate's fulfilment of various pre-recruitment formalities, are initiated. Qualified candidates not selected for a specific post may then be added to the Roster for future consideration against appropriate vacancies.

D. Roster of external candidates

82. Applications for specific vacancies or for general consideration are received on a regular basis in the Recruitment and Placement Division, Professional Staffing Service (PSS), OHRM. Recruitment and placement officers and other staff of PSS and the Technical Assistance Recruitment and Administration Service (TARAS) are responsible for the identification of potential candidates for the Roster of External Candidates by applying the following general criteria: (a) appropriate university degree; (b) overall suitability for United Nations programmes; (c) nationality consonant with recruitment targets; and (d) age considerations, as mandatory retirement age is 60.

83. The Departments/Offices concerned are requested to evaluate the qualifications of such applicants and recommend for inclusion in the Roster only those who are likely to be given serious consideration in the event of a suitable vacancy. Staff of the Professional Staffing Service analyse the information in the applications and code all relevant information on special forms for inclusion of the relevant data concerning suitable candidates in the Roster.

E. Appointment and promotion bodies

84. In accordance with Staff Rule 104.14, the Appointment and Promotion Board and Committees are established by the Secretary-General to advise him on the appointment, promotion and review of staff in the Professional category up to and

including the D-1 level. Excluded are those staff members specifically recruited for service with the subsidiary organizations of the United Nations that have their own appointment and promotion bodies as well as staff appointed through competitive examinations, as described in section B above.

85. Recommendations for all such actions are presented to the respective Appointment and Promotion body by the Office of Human Resources Management after consultation with the substantive department concerned.

F. Recruitment and placement of technical co-operation expert personnel

86. The selection, recruitment and placement of expert personnel is the principal modality for the attainment of the objectives of technical co-operation, that is the transfer of skills. Specifically, it accounts for close to 60 per cent of the total DTCD budget.

87. During the initial phases of its implementation, the United Nations Technical Co-operation Programme relied very heavily on personnel appointed and sent to developing countries for relatively long periods of time. Such experts were accorded the status and the benefits of staff members of the Organization. They were afforded the protection of the International Convention on Privileges and Immunities and remunerated on the same basis as personnel of the Secretariat. There were differences, of course, for though some experts were reassigned to different projects successively without a break in service, the prospect of making a career of technical assistance never formed an integral part of the pattern in project personnel recruitment and administration.

88. Development requirements, the progress of technology and the changing configuration of government priorities in the recipient countries have made impermanence the rule in technical co-operation assignments. They have also dictated a different approach in matters of staffing policy and personnel administration than those established for Secretariat purposes.

89. Applied to the Technical Co-operation Programme, the 200 Series of the Staff Rules guarantees a measure of autonomy with levels of remuneration calculated to secure for the developing countries the highest standards of competence. The paramount criteria in the selection for technical co-operation projects have always been merit and specialization. The wishes of the Government are yet another factor. Geographical representation, on the other hand, is no consideration, and although universality requires that the United Nations afford to all equal chances in competing for technical co-operation positions, a "quota system" has never been part of staffing policies in this area.

90. A special category of personnel recruited under the 200 Series of the Staff Rules are the associate experts. There are currently close to 100 serving at duty stations as far afield as Central and South America and the South Pacific. Recently, a small number have also been assigned to Headquarters posts where they perform project-related research and development functions. Associate experts are

relatively young (normally 24-33) men and women whose service in the framework of the United Nations Technical Co-operation Programme is funded entirely by their respective Governments.

91. In qualitative terms, expert personnel recruited under the 200 Series of the Staff Rules still represent a very major part of the personnel component. Numerically, however, they constitute a declining proportion of all technical co-operation recruitment. Increasingly, the bulk of posts to be filled are posts of short-term consultants recruited on the basis of Special Service Agreements for widely varying periods.

92. The Special Service Agreement defines the distinctive status of consultants in the employ of the United Nations. Consultants have the status of private contractors, whose particular conditions are specified by the terms of their agreement. They are not staff members of the United Nations.

93. A preponderant component of all project personnel, consultants represent a very diverse group. Still a very large proportion are individuals recruited directly and paid an honorarium which may vary widely depending on supply and demand in any particular field, at any particular time. Other consultants, however, are hired on the basis of reimbursable loan agreements with the companies to which they belong and for which they work on a regular basis.

94. One of the cardinal rules for maintaining the independence of experts and consultants in the discharge of their functions was to preclude the services of such experts and consultants in their country of nationality. International recruitment is still the rule in technical co-operation. Increasingly, however, national professional project personnel (NPPP) are appointed in the framework of United Nations project activities. Rewarded on the basis of the best prevailing local rates, they have recently become a feature in a growing number of countries even outside the framework of government execution.

95. Another novel group are the United Nations Volunteers. Like the NPPP, they are not staff members of the United Nations but form a component from which an increasing number of experts and consultants will eventually be chosen. With growing diversification, the challenge of complexity in the recruitment and administration of project personnel has also grown. It remains a critical dimension of the Technical Co-operation Programme.

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